

LAERSKOOL WELGEMOED PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Bullying policy

1. Introduction

This document is the bullying policy of Welgemoed Primary School, as approved by the School Governing Body on 9 March 2023. The policy has been drafted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996; the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 ('SASA'); the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996; applicable provincial legislation on school education; the Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011; the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

All learners have the right to attend a public school that is a safe and secure learning environment. It is the intent of Welgemoed Primary to provide all learners with an equitable opportunity to learn. To that end, the school has a significant interest in providing a safe, orderly and respectful school environment, which is conducive to teaching and learning.

Bullying is detrimental to the school environment and to learners' learning, achievement and well-being. It interferes with the mission of the school to educate learners, and disrupts school operations. Bullying affects not only learners who are targets, but also those who participate in and witness such behaviour. It must be addressed to ensure learner safety and an inclusive learning environment.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct for Learners, of which it forms an integral part.

2. Definitions

Bullying means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more learners, educators, non-educators or visitors to the school premises. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal or physical behaviour, including any threatening, insulting or dehumanising gesture, by a learner or adult, which is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment,

cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the learner's school performance or participation, and may involve, but is not limited to:

- (i) teasing;
- (ii) social exclusion;
- (iii) threat;
- (iv) intimidation;
- (v) stalking;
- (vi) physical violence;
- (vii) theft;
- (viii) sexual, religious or racial harassment;
- (ix) public humiliation; and
- (x) destruction of property.

Crimen iniuria means the unlawful, intentional and serious violation of the dignity or privacy of another person.

Criminal defamation means the unlawful and intentional publication of a matter concerning another, which tends to seriously injure his or her reputation.

Extortion means when a person unlawfully and intentionally obtains some advantage, which may be of either a patrimonial or non-patrimonial nature, from another by subjecting the latter to pressure, which induces him or her to hand over the advantage.

Harassment means directly or indirectly engaging in conduct that the perpetrator knows or ought to know:

- i) causes harm or inspires the reasonable belief that harm may be caused to the complainant or a related person by unreasonably:
 - (a) following, watching, pursuing or accosting of the complainant or a related person, or loitering outside or near the building or place where the complainant or a related person resides, works, carries on business, studies or happens to be;
 - (b) engaging in verbal, electronic or any other communication aimed at the complainant or a related person, by any means, whether or not conversation ensues; or
 - (c) sending, delivering or causing the delivery of letters, telegrams, packages, facsimiles, electronic mail or other objects to the complainant or a related

person, or leaving them where they will be found by, given to or brought to the attention of the complainant or a related person.

Retaliation means an act or gesture against a person for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. 'Retaliation' also includes reporting an act of bullying when it is not made in good faith.

3. Application

3.1 This policy applies to any learner, educator and non-educator employed at the school as well as any visitor or volunteer who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, all of whom have the responsibility to comply with this policy.

3.2 This policy applies to bullying that:

3.2.1 takes place at the school or on school grounds, meaning a school building; on property on which a school building or facility is located, and in/on property that is owned, leased or used by a school for a school-sponsored activity, function, programme, instruction or training, with 'school grounds' also including vehicles used for school-related transport;

3.2.2 takes place while learners are being transported to or from schools or school-sponsored events;

3.2.3 takes place at any school-sponsored event, activity, function, programme, instruction or training;

3.2.4 takes place through the use of data, telephone, computer software or technology that is accessed through a computer, computer system or computer network of the school; or

3.2.5 takes place elsewhere, but only if the bullying also infringes on the rights of the learner at school, or if the school itself is in any way involved or implicated.

4. Prohibited activities or behaviour

4.1 The following behaviour is prohibited:

4.1.1 Bullying

4.1.2 Cyberbullying

4.1.3 Harassment

4.1.4 Retaliation against those reporting such defined behaviour

4.1.5 False accusations of bullying behaviour

4.1.6 Defamation of the school's good name

Any person who engages in any of these prohibited behaviour shall be subject to consequences.

5. Reporting

- 5.1 Bullying, suspected bullying or any other prohibited action mentioned under paragraph 4.1 above is reportable in person or in writing (including anonymously) to school staff. Any person aware of any bullying, suspected bullying or any other prohibited action mentioned under paragraph 4.1 is required to report incidents to the school principal or other school staff designated by the principal.
- 5.2 Parents and other adults who are aware of incidents of bullying are encouraged to report this behaviour to a staff member.
- 5.3 All other members of the school community, including learners, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in person to the principal or principal's designee.
- 5.4 Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. If it is determined that a learner has falsely accused another of bullying, such learner shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.
- 5.5 In case of a violation of any provision prescribed in this policy, the disciplinary procedures as set out in the school's Code of Conduct: Disciplinary Action is to be followed.

Alternative disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to:

- (i) meeting with the learner and the learner's parents;
- (ii) reflective activities, such as requiring the learner to write an essay about the learner's misbehaviour;
- (iii) counselling;
- (iv) anger management;
- (v) health counselling or intervention;
- (vi) mental health counselling;

(vii) participation in skills-building and dispute resolution activities, such as social-emotional cognitive skills building, dispute resolution circles and restorative conferencing.

5.6 The victim of the bullying incident, or other learners who witnessed the incident, is encouraged to indicate on the Bullying Chart provided in each classroom when he/she was exposed to a bullying incident. Any bullying incident may be reported directly to the teachers by learners and parents.

Support for the victim of a bullying incidents depend on the professional judgement of the educator who it is reported to and may include:

5.6.1 a personal discussion with the victim;

5.6.2 allow a learner to stay in class with friends during a break;

5.6.3 inform the parents of the victim and request parents to visit the school if possible;

5.6.4 accompany the victim to the Principal or Deputy Principal, who shall contact the parents for a discussion;

5.6.5 contact the parents of the victim to request permission for the learner to receive trauma counselling.

SIGNED AT WELGEMOED ON THIS 9th DAY OF MARCH 2023



Governing Body Chairperson



School principal